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ABSTRACT

The goal of this project was to develop and field test training materials for students and teachers which would increase the probability of obtaining valid test results from the administration of standardized group achievement tests. The specific objectives were: (1) to produce a self-instructing videotape illustrating correct and incorrect test administration practices; and (2) to train teachers to implement appropriate test administration procedures during group achievement testing. The videotape developed was shown to elementary teachers prior to testing. The tape contains scenarios that model procedures for training students in test taking skills and that demonstrate examples and nonexamples of standardized test administration techniques. After this training, a field test was administered to evaluate its success in the improvement of the quality of test administration. Results of the data collected, indicate that teachers trained with the videotape were significantly more on-task than a control group; and students in the trained teachers group received significantly higher test scores than students in the untrained group. The implications of having trained teachers administer group tests is that a more accurate measure of achievement is obtained. (Author/AEF)

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VIDEOTAPE FOR TRAINING ELEMENTARY TEACHERS TO ADMINISTER GROUP STANDARDIZED TESTS

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ABSTRACT

The validity of achievement test scores is influenced by the degree of proper standardized administration procedures being implemented. To train students and teachers in appropriate testing behaviors, a videotape was developed and shown to elementary teachers prior to testing. The tape contains scenarios that model procedures for training students in test taking skills and that demonstrate examples and nonexamples of standardized test administration techniques. Results of data collected during test administration indicate that teachers trained with the videotape were significantly more on-task than a control group; and students in the trained teachers group received significantly higher test scores than students in the untrained group. The implications of having trained teachers administer group tests is that a more accurate measure of achievement is obtained.

Videotape for Training Elementary Teachers
to Administer Group Standardized Tests[1]

Perspective

Most elementary teachers and students participate in group standardized achievement testing at least once every year. The nation's test manufacturers provide an estimated 200 million booklets per year to schools, which translates to 3.5 tests per student per year. Although a small portion of time during the school year (usually less than 3%) is acutally budgeted for achievement testing, the results are used for important decisions in the areas of placement, curriculum, funding, and accountability.

Test results most useful to educational leaders are obtained when test procedures closely parallel those used during the standardization process. When testing procedures diverge from those in effect during standardization, the results may not be comparable to the results obtained from the norming population. Consequently, interpretations based on such results are suspect.

When teachers are not knowledgeable about the correct standardized procedures and do not implement them during testing, achievement test scores will be invalid as indicators of student knowledge. In essence, results are valid to the extent that standardized procedures are followed.

The degree to which correct test administration procedures occur was demonstrated by data collected during the spring 1980 testing of Title I students in 13 Utah school districts. Data were recorded by an observer who watched the teacher for appropriate behaviors. Less than 60% of the teachers:

1. provided time before the test for bathroom, drinks, and pencil sharpening,
2. seated nonattenders in front,
3. positioned desks so students' faces and booklets could be seen,

[1]This research was supported by Handicapped Student Research Grant #13-443A from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped.

4. explained the reason for the test,
5. verbally rewarded attentive behavior,
6. reminded the students of the testing rules,
7. looked at the class between sentences,
8. alerted the aide to nonattenders, or
9. followed directions on not repeating items.

Additional data collected on teachers during test administration indicated teachers maintained on task behavior (standardized conditions) 54.7% of the total test period.

Although invalid scores are the major concern when unstandardized testing procedures are evident, other undesirable consequences may occur:

1. invalid diagnostic data,
2. invalid project and program evaluations,
3. poor test-taking habits,
4. negative attitudes, and
5. differential testing behavior among testers.

The occurrence of unstandardized testing procedures and the resulting invalid scores would be largely eliminated if test administrators followed the correct procedures. If a systematic and uniform program for training test administration were provided to teachers prior to testing, the probability of correct procedures being implemented would increase.

Objectives

The goal of this project was to develop and field test training materials for students and teachers which would increase the probability of obtaining valid test results from the administration of standardized group achievement tests. The specific objectives are listed below:

1. To produce a self-instructing videotape illustrating correct and incorrect test administration practices.
2. To train teachers to implement appropriate test administration procedures during group achievement testing.

Methods

To facilitate the acquisition of appropriate testing skills and the implementation of standardized testing procedures, a training program was developed for test administrators. A one-hour videotape was produced and used during training to depict classroom scenarios of examples and nonexamples of correct methods for administering tests and for training students to be more test-wise.

Development

The content of the training package was based on the results of preliminary data collection and a literature search. Observational data was collected from watching students and teachers during actual group testing. Research studies were reviewed to determine which factors seem to contribute to higher test scores.

The tape was prepared in two sections: 1) student training, and 2) student testing. The student training part models the procedure for preparing students to take tests. Illustrated are techniques for obtaining group response, for teaching unique response formats, for distinguishing the question from other information, for teaching testing rules, and for creating an environment to motivate students to try their best.

The student testing scenes that displayed both appropriate (standardized) and inappropriate test administration techniques were particularly potent because of the quick comparison of the different effects on students. Content covered included the use of an aide, elimination of distraction, use of reinforcement, application of group response, establishment of conducive classroom environment, and reading of directions and questions. During the training, teachers completed a checklist of appropriate testing events while watching the videotaped scenes.

Field Test

After the training package was developed and reviewed by various content experts at Utah State University, a field test was arranged

with a large metropolitan school district to assess whether the training actually enhanced the quality of test administration. Prior to district-wide achievement testing, 24 Title I teachers, their aides, and their students were randomly assigned as a classroom unit to either the trained condition or the untrained condition. The teachers and aides in the trained group were trained in test administration techniques by watching the videotape. Data was collected on teacher on-task behavior (recorded by observers during testing) and on the student test scores for both groups.

Results

Observation data collected during test administration indicated that teachers in the trained group exhibited a significantly ($p<.001$) higher percent of on-task behavior ($\overline{X} = 73.74$) than teachers in the untrained group ($\overline{X} = 26.55$). The difference in means was greater than 2.7 standard deviations. Furthermore, it was found that student achievement test scores were significantly different ($p<.09$) between the trained ($\overline{X} = 84.8$) and untrained ($\overline{X} = 80.3$) group. The higher student scores obtained by the trained teacher group demonstrated a closer estimation of actual achievement.

Educational Importance

That teachers can be trained to administer tests correctly is evidenced by the difference in percent of teacher on-task behavior and by the difference in student test scores between groups. When teachers do not follow standardized procedures, there is a higher probability of increased student anxiety, invalid diagnostic data, and inconsistent test administration practices. The implications of having trained teachers administer group achievement tests is that a more accurate measure of student achievement is obtained as higher scores are produced. Therefore, test administrators should be trained in standardized techniques and, as this project demonstrates, the videotaped package is an effective method for increasing appropriate testing behavior.